

**Public Diplomacy and Educational Partnerships:
Remarks to the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS)**

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Thank you.

I'm delighted to be here and to address one of the preeminent organizations representing private and independent schools in the United States — with its timely and vital theme, "Opening the Doors to the Global Schoolhouse."

The schools you represent provide both the excellence and diversity that enrich our entire educational system — public and private, pre-K to post-doctoral.

There is no single path to inspiring a child, no one methodology that will open a student's mind. In their innovation and yes, independence, your schools serve as models for quality education that affects the education of our children far beyond the actual numbers in your classrooms.

My State Department colleagues and I appreciate your invitation to participate in this critically important conference, and the opportunity to tell you about some of the educational and cultural exchange initiatives we are sponsoring that involve secondary schools. We share with you the importance of international education of youth and adults and believe it is the responsibility of all Americans to be informed about issues that impact our nation's security, our ability to compete successfully in the global market

place and understand and respect other cultures and people. My hope is that we will find common ground with your interests so that we can work more closely together in supporting our mutual goals and objectives.

We're also delighted at the opportunity to learn from your experiences and perspective on issues of education — domestic and international — that we can take back and share with our colleagues at the State Department who are in the business of supporting international education exchange programs.

In talking with your representatives in Washington, I know that many of the schools in the NAIS network are interested in ways to internationalize their campuses. We're delighted to hear that — and right off the bat — we can suggest three ways of becoming more involved immediately.

First, conduct online virtual exchanges.

Second, host exchange students.

And third, sponsor the travel of your students and teachers to other countries.

There, that was easy. Well, easy to list perhaps. But all three constitute invaluable ways in which your schools and students can engage the world. And all three, I might add, are activities in which many of your schools are already engaged — which we deeply appreciate.

There is a vast world of exchange opportunities out there. I encourage you to check out what we offer at the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs for secondary students and educators. Our website is exchanges.state.gov and we invite you to visit our booth #123 in the exhibition hall.

This is a time of great challenge internationally, but also one of great promise in bringing the cause of freedom, and the institutions of democracy, to parts of the world that have experienced neither in the past through education.

Let me begin by giving you a framework for understanding why we are placing renewed emphasis on supporting global education initiatives. Global education is a critical part of our public diplomacy strategy. So let me explain the role of public diplomacy generally in the context of American foreign policy — and specifically the role that we envision that youth, and those who influence youth can play in supporting our strategic interests abroad.

When we talk about public diplomacy, most people naturally think of the issues that seize the headlines — demonstrations over Danish cartoons, Palestinian elections, violence in Iraq. And indeed, we must always deal with the daily point-counterpoint of explaining U.S. policy, rebutting disinformation, and seeking to provide clear explanations and factual information.

But let me suggest that much of the important work of public diplomacy goes on behind the headlines, and works in ways that are much longer term, and less visible. The term hidden public diplomacy may sound like an oxymoron, but it is perhaps a more accurate description of much of what we do — particularly in areas like international educational exchanges, which rarely garner headlines.

Today in this globalized world, public diplomacy is a strategic imperative.

Public diplomacy is not public relations or spin — but to link people and policy, to build institutional relationships, to send a clear and consistent message, over time, about our policies and the values that underlie them. To stay with the physics metaphors

of this conference, let me quote Kofi Anan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, who said, “Arguing against globalization is like arguing against the laws of gravity.” He concludes that the majority of our problems with globalization are a result of the misunderstanding between cultures. By working to support peace and global issues we better understand the relationship between globalization and traditions and cultures.

That is why dialogue—the exchange of ideas is so important. By establishing avenues of dialogue and mutual understanding, we can advance the three basic principles that inform all our public diplomacy efforts — principles that I believe have advanced steadily, sometimes visible, sometimes unseen, behind the headlines.

We are implementing our public diplomacy initiatives through a set of strategic pillars that we have dubbed the four "E's": engagement, exchanges, education, and empowerment.

Our first pillar, engagement, means that we must find ways to explain and advocate our policies and share our values and our humanity in ways that are fast, accurate, and authoritative — whether face-to-face, or via satellite television, the Internet, and print.

Silence is not an option in a networked world of 24-hour news outlets, satellite television, websites, and blogs. The days of the stiff "no comment" are pretty much gone. You have to get it right and get it out fast.

The media, like nature itself, abhor a vacuum — and gossip, speculation, conspiracy theories, innuendo, and sheer misinformation will fill up any vacant space out there.

Our second pillar is one that I will return to in greater detail shortly — exchanges -- Both our efforts to welcome and encourage foreign students to travel and study here — and for American students to do likewise overseas.

Our third pillar — not surprisingly — is education. Just as we seek to tell our story to the world, we seek to encourage and educate Americans to become better and more knowledgeable international citizens.

The days when a "junior year abroad" was a special reward for special students is long past. We may not be able to afford overseas study for most students, but we all recognize that they must be educated to compete and succeed in a networked world where globalization is not a debate, but a fact.

Finally, our fourth pillar, empowerment, recognizes the voice of government and government officials are often neither the most powerful or, frankly, the most credible voices advocating the values and principles we stand for.

We need people of every nation and background and faith and tradition to raise their voices as well. In other words, we need partners. Partners to forward a mutual agenda of American values in freedom, economic advancement, and educational opportunity.

Let me return for a moment to that second pillar — exchanges.

We know that, over the long term, our educational exchange programs remain our single most effective public diplomacy tool. Americans who go overseas describe their lives as being changed forever. Likewise, foreign students who travel here have the opportunity to move beyond stereotype and pop culture images — and learn firsthand of

the richness and diversity of American life, and of the generosity and friendship of the American people.

Simply put, these exchanges are transformational. They are agents of change. They work. One of our most successful programs the International Visitor Leadership Program, which has been the bedrock of ECA's work for decades, has brought over 200 current and former heads of government or chiefs of nations. We have 33 International Visitor alumni who are currently serving as heads of government. Let me name a few of these alumni, who came to the United States before they were world renowned figures—Margaret Thatcher, Anwar Sadat, Tony Blair, President Ricardo Lagos of Chile, Chancellor Schroeder of Germany, President Karzai of Afghanistan, and the list goes on. I will tell you about one story that is going on this week in Boston and Washington, DC, with out FLEX students and Alumni:

Because we know these exchanges work and we need more of them, the Bush Administration has increased funding for our oldest and best-known exchange programs, such as the International Visitor Leadership Program and Fulbright — and launched new ones, like the Edward R. Murrow Journalism Program and the Fortune International Women's Mentor Leadership Program.

But, I particularly want to highlight our expanding youth exchange programs — particularly those that focus on secondary school students.

For example, our YES program — Youth Exchange and Study — provides scholarships for high school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend a full academic year in the U.S. This year, which is the third for the YES

program, the program has increased from 455 to more than 600 students from the Middle East, Africa, South and Southeast Asia.

In some respects, the YES program for Arab and Muslim students is modeled after our Future Leaders Exchange, or FLEX program, which began with the end of the Cold War. Since 1993, under FLEX, more than 15,000 high school students from countries of the former Soviet Union have studied here for an academic year.

As an enhancement to their studies this year, 120 FLEX participants are in Washington, DC, participating in a Civic Education Workshop. These students were winners of an essay contest on the theme of civic engagement and how an individual can make a difference. Their essays were a remarkable reminder of what inspiration our country can offer to the younger generation to encourage leadership, democratic values and community service.

YES and FLEX are probably enough acronyms for one speech. But I do want to stress the diversity and scope of these youth exchanges and institutional partnerships that we conduct with schools, academic organizations, and community volunteer organizations throughout the country.

Let me highlight a program similar to the Challenge 20/20 Program that NAIS is launching, and that is our Global Connections and Exchange program, which has provided training in Internet and information technology to more than 30,000 students and teachers in 25 countries. And our sponsorship of youth-leadership programs at both the high school and college undergraduate levels. We hope through further discussion with NAIS and with other schools we can find ways to work together.

The vitality, the freedom, the achievements of our educational enterprise have served as models — and inspiration — for much of the world. And the world has learned its lessons well. So well, in fact, that today we face unprecedented global competition in science, technology, research, and overall educational attainment.

We must equip our children with the tools and skills and knowledge to compete and succeed in a world of innovation and change — at a speed and on a scale that we have never experienced before.

Before I conclude, I will take a moment to focus on another new program that is key to our ultimate public diplomacy success — the National Security Language Initiative, announced by President Bush in January at the Summit for U.S. University Presidents at the Department of State.

Relative to other nations, we have long lagged in foreign language instruction, and especially in languages whose importance is growing — such as Arabic, Chinese, Urdu, Russian, Farsi, Hindi and a few others.

There are all sorts of numbers one can cite here, and I'll pick just one set. More than 200 million children in China are studying English, but only about 24,000 elementary and high school students in the U.S. are studying Chinese.

The ubiquity of English around the world remains an enormous asset, but it is no substitute for meeting the challenge of our new multilingual century. In short, this is not just a matter of keeping up with bilingual Chinese or Europeans fluent in three or four languages. It is not just an education issue; it is a matter of global competitiveness, national security, and civic and social awareness.

To prepare American students for the future, we must follow the example that some school districts are beginning to set by expanding the teaching of foreign languages to K-12 students. Under the National Strategic Language Initiative, we can substantially increase the number of Americans who speak, and teach foreign languages — with special emphasis on these critical-need languages.

The President is seeking \$114 million in next year's budget for this initiative. It is supported by the Department of State, Department of Defense and the Department of Education. For example, will enable 24 school districts across the country to partner with colleges and universities to adopt effective language programs in earlier grades. In addition, the initiative will create a Language Teacher Corps that will aim at putting 1,000 new foreign language teachers into American schools by the end of the decade. And there will be many more initiatives launched.

For our part, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is focusing on programs to bring native speakers to teach in American schools — and to send American learners of hard languages overseas for year-long and summer full-immersion studies and living experiences. We expect to have pilot programs in Arabic and Chinese starting this summer.

But languages are only one part of preparing students for our ever-changing world; exchange programs are another. Our success as a nation has always mirrored our success in pursuing the two ideals of educational opportunity and excellence. To a greater degree than ever before, that success will rest upon our knowledge and understanding of other nations and cultures — as well as our ability to compete in a networked global community.

Our nation's exchange programs play a critical role in building and maintaining these networks of global understanding and dialogue — whether the approximately 30,000 participants per year through the State Department, or the vastly greater number of participants through schools, colleges, and academic organizations all over the country the country.

The common denominator in all these exchange programs is the partnership among government, schools, educational organizations, and individual citizens.

And this brings me to my final point. All of these educational exchange programs rest upon a vast and indispensable network of volunteers and host families. And as many of you know — whether you have opened your doors to a foreign student, or had doors opened as an overseas student yourself — such home visits can be the most memorable and enriching part of any international experience.

But along with open doors to American homes, we must continue to have open doors to American classrooms. Unfortunately, we're seeing a trend in some public schools to charge for visiting foreign students — precisely at the time when we are seeking to expand such youth exchanges, and bring new and diverse student populations whose exposure to American life and culture has been minimal.

We hope to counter this trend by pointing out the obvious educational and cultural benefits to students and schools who host foreign students.

The record is clear: Foreign students bring far more than they take.

The situation for private and independent schools is, of course, somewhat different. Nevertheless, I would make the same argument. By welcoming international students through tuition- or fee-waivers, you are engaging the global community in ways

that provide enormous educational benefits for all — students, schools, communities, and the nation.

Through our vital and growing partnerships in international education and exchanges, we can continue to open wide the doors of the global schoolhouse, to compete and succeed in a world of new and unprecedented challenges.

We can advance the frontiers of knowledge as well as the cause of individual freedom that is the common birthright of us all.

Thank you.